

SERMONS AND SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA



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By
SUDHAKAR DIKSHIT



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Foreword

The 2,500th Buddha Jayanti souvenir publications, issued by the Buddha Jayanti Charities Society, Bombay, are not planned as scholarly works on Buddhism. Their main object is to present in simple language the essence of the teaching of the Buddha. The present book, as well as the others that are to follow in this series, while based upon the Buddhist classics and canonical works, are not literal translations of the texts referred to in the various chapters. The authors of these books have only tried to put into easy prose the central ideas of the texts upon which they have drawn and have purposely eschewed complicated turns of expression and archaic phraseology. It is hoped that scholars of Buddhism will pardon these shortcomings, which arise mainly out of our avowed object of placing before the ordinary men and women

the universality of the Buddha's teaching. If these publications succeed in creating an awareness of Buddhism in the common man, our purpose will be well served.

Harekrushna Mahtab,
Chairman,
The Buddha Jayanti Charities Society,
Bombay.

Preface

The *Sermons and Sayings of the Buddha* are gems of "purest ray serene", picked up at random from the vast treasures of the *Digha-Nikaya*, *Majjhima-Nikaya*, *Anguttara-Nikaya*, *Udana* etc. It may be that there are numerous verses and chapters in these noble works which could be considered more illuminating than those selected by us. But then such a selection as this, of its very nature, can never be fully representative. It is no more than a drop from an ocean, but it has the same flavour, the flavour of the ocean.

The short pieces put together in this volume are not literal translations of the texts on which they are based. As our learned Chairman, Dr Harekrushna Mahtab, has aptly pointed out in his Foreword, the writings published in the present series were not designed to be translations of the Buddhist texts. Our object has been to present in simple language the kernel of Buddhist thought in such a manner that the common man may be

able to grasp it without difficulty The success of our endeavour is, therefore, to be judged by the reaction of the common man and not that of the spiritual mentor or the literary critic.

Sudhakar Dikshit

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painful, but useless. The middle path is the best. It produces insight and mental calm, which ultimately lead to Nirvana.

And what is the middle path? It is a state of self-discipline, through an eightfold endeavour. I call it the "eightfold path"—consisting of right understanding, right aspiration, right speech, right conduct, right vocation, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. One who follows this eightfold path develops an insight and a mental calm which ultimately lead to Nirvana.

Bhikkhus, now I will tell you the four Aryan (noble) Truths. These are sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the uprooting of sorrow and the eightfold path.

1 SORROW IS EVERYWHERE Old age, disease and death, frustration, dejection and despair—all lead to sorrow. And any contact with this world of sorrow leads only to sorrow.

2 DESIRE IS THE CAUSE OF SORROW Desire is a selfish, blind force which demands more and more and is never satisfied. Dejection and frustration are its very essence. It is ever unfulfilled and therefore always produces sorrow.

3 DESIRELESSNESS UPROOTS SOR

ROW The only way to uproot sorrow is to strike at its root—desire. If desire is abandoned sorrow too will be eliminated.

4 THE EIGHTFOLD PATH disciplines

the mind and destroys desire. By right understanding, aspiration, speech, conduct, etc., man can curb selfish desire and can rise above himself.

These are the FOUR ARYAN TRUTHS

bhikkhus. By realising them, knowledge and wisdom came to me and I achieved enlightenment.

Thus spoke the Enlightened One and the five bhikkhus expressed their delight at this utterance.

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*



Pleasures of the Senses

What satisfaction do men get from the pleasures of the senses?

There are five pleasures of the senses To see with the eye desirable sights, to hear with the ear agreeable sounds, to smell with the nose sweet odours, to taste with the tongue pleasant flavours and to feel by touch what is pleasurable All these five pleasures while offering satisfaction also arouse passion

What are the perils from the pleasures of the senses?

Take the case of a respectable young man, who has adopted a calling, but is unable to make a fortune in spite of hard work He grieves because he cannot enjoy the pleasures of the senses

If, on the other hand, he succeeds in his calling and makes a fortune, he becomes anxious to preserve it He becomes anxious to preserve the pleasures of the senses which he has accumulated, and is in constant fear

of thieves and robbers And if, in spite of his watchfulness, his fortune is stolen or robbed, he grieves over the loss He grieves because the pleasures of the senses have been snatched from him

Thus the man who hankers after the pleasures of the senses is fated to grieve if he does not succeed in obtaining them, he is fated to grieve even if he obtains them, for the anxiety to preserve them gnaws at his heart and destroys his peace, he is fated to grieve again when the pleasures of the senses are snatched from him

It is the lust for pleasures of the senses that is the root of all sorrow and suffering It is for this that kings fight with kings, citizens fight with citizens, brothers fight with brothers and men fall prey to destruction and death

Such are the perils from pleasures of the senses

It is because of the lust for pleasures of the senses that men become thieves, robbers and adulterers and suffer untold miseries by way of punishment

It is only because of the lust for pleasures of the senses that men go astray in deed and

word and thought and suffer not only in their earthly life, but even after death, when the woes of Hell overtake them

What is the way to save oneself from the pleasures of the senses?

The only way of deliverance from pleasures of the senses is to shed all desire for them. Those who do not understand the true nature of the satisfaction and the perils from pleasures of the senses cannot instruct others about the way of deliverance from them.

Take for example the pleasure derived from visible forms. A woman in the prime of her youth may offer visual pleasure by her charm. In fact anything charming gives visual pleasure.

Suppose, later on, the same woman is seen in decrepit old age, with her body emaciated, or is seen suffering from a serious malady, stinking in her own offal and urine, or is seen as a corpse flung into the charnel ground, being devoured by hawks and vultures—all the pleasure that her charm once gave is converted into pain and toilsome sorrow. The only deliverance from such pain and sorrow lies in shedding the desire for visual pleasure.

There are four states of bliss or ecstasy which the man enjoys who has found deliverance from the pleasures of the senses

In the first stage he divests himself of the pleasures of the senses and the wrong states of consciousness born of them. He develops an inward aloofness, but continues to observe and reflect

In the second stage he rises above reflection and develops a concentration that leads to inner peace

In the third stage he sheds away completely satisfaction and dissatisfaction, joys and sorrows, and prepares himself for final emancipation

In the fourth stage, which is the stage of emancipation, he evolves an alert mindfulness, which is beyond everything transitory and beyond all known experience. He gains deliverance from all feelings

Verily, the way of true deliverance is to shed all desire

Thus spoke the Blessed One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what the Blessed One said

—*Maha-Dukkha-Kkhandha-Sutta*

Pleasures of Renunciation

Once when the Blessed One was staying at Savatthi, he addressed the bhikkhus as follows

In the days before I became enlightened it occurred to me to sort out my thoughts into two separate groups. Into one group I put thoughts relating to the pleasures of the senses and to violence, and into the other group thoughts relating to renunciation and non-violence.

When there arose within me a thought about the pleasures of the senses, I immediately recognised that it would do harm both to myself and to others. This reflection helped me to drive away the thought about the pleasures of the senses.

Now, remember, whatsoever you think about much will ultimately mould your mind. If you think much about the pleasures of the senses, your mind will be moulded accordingly and thoughts of renunciation will not find an

ahode in your mind, and the same will happen if you think much about harm and hurt and violence and revenge

As in the last month of the rains, when the countryside is covered with rich crops, the cowherd has to keep a sharp eye on his cattle, heating them off here, herding them there, driving them with a stick, or checking their way, even so did I control my thoughts, inclined to pleasures of the senses, and wrong states of mind

When there arose within me a thought of renunciation, I immediately recognised that it would not harm myself or others. I realised that this thought would help me towards Nirvana

Then, by day and night, I dwelt on the thought of renunciation and my mind was moulded accordingly. And thoughts of love and goodwill towards all came to me

As in the last month of summer, when the crops have been reaped and garnered in the village and the cowherd has only to see, sitting under a shady tree, that his cows are all there in the open field, even so bhikkhus, I had only to watch that right states of my

mind were there.

Constant effort in avoiding thoughts of pleasures of the senses and dwelling upon the thought of renunciation gave me an inner peace that knew no distraction, a steadfastness of mind that never wavered. Thus, shedding the pleasures of the senses and wrong states of mind I entered the state of ecstasy which is Enlightenment.

—*Dvedha-Vitakka Sutta*



The Wise Man

If you meet a man who tells you what is to be avoided and who reproaches you, follow that man, for he is wise. Let him reproach you, let him forbid what is improper and let him teach what is proper, for he is the wise man, a beloved of God, though hated by the bad people.

The wise man always rejoices in the Dhamma, lives in the Dhamma and has a purposeful mind.

The wise man does not waver in praise or blame and stands firm like a solid rock unshaken by the wind.

The wise man, filled with the knowledge of Dhamma, is deep, still and serene like a lake, he never appears elated or downcast.

If there is a man who hankers not after wealth or power, either for himself or for others, then he is a wise man.

The wise man should leave the darkness of the ordinary life and adopt the bright state

of the bhikkhu He should go from home to a homeless state and in his retirement seek enjoyment where enjoyment seemed difficult The wise man should leave all pleasures behind and call nothing his own He should purge his mind of all vices

The wise man, who clings to nothing and rejoices in his freedom from attachment, who has conquered his appetites, will win Nirvana even in this world

—*Sutta-Pitaka*



5

The Fool

Long is the night to him who is awake,
long is the path to him who is tired Even so,
long is life to the foolish one who does not
know the true Dhamma

If a traveller does not come across anyone who is his superior or at least equal, let him keep to his solitary journey firmly, for there is no use having the company of a fool

"These are my sons, this is my wealth"—such thoughts torment only a fool, who does not know that he himself does not belong to himself, much less his sons and his wealth

The fool who knows that he is foolish is wise to that extent But the fool who considers himself to be wise is indeed a fool

If a fool lives with a wise man all his life, he will be able to perceive as much of the truth as the spoon lying in the soup may perceive of its taste

But if a man of understanding be associated with the wise even though for only a

minute, he will soon perceive the truth, like the tongue tasting the soup

Fools are the greatest enemies of their own selves, for their foolish deeds bear bitter fruits for them

That deed is wrong after doing which one repents and the result of which one receives with tears

And that deed is good after doing which one has not to repent and the reward of which one receives with a smile

As long as an evil deed does not bear its fruit, the fool thinks it is honey, but when the deed bears fruit the fool suffers untold grief

—*Sutta-Pitaka*



Friends: False and True

Speaking to the young householder Sigala, the Enlightened One said—

There are four kinds of friends who are in reality foes in the garb of friends. These are: the out-and-out robber; the one who is good at mere words; the one who is sweet-tongued; and the one who is a wastrel.

The first one, who is out-and-out a robber, tries to get much by giving little; he does his duty, but only out of fear; he follows you, but only for his own profit.

The second one, who is good at mere words, greets you with stories of his past achievements; he tempts you with hopes of future successes; he talks and talks, but when need arises he fails to act as a friend and for this also he blames his own ill-luck.

The third one, who is sweet-tongued, is compliant in evil deeds, but not in good; he sings your praises to your face, but speaks ill of you behind your back.

The fourth one, who is a wastrel, will join you in drinking and other evil ways, like gambling and loafing

These four kinds of friends, O young householder, are really foes in the garb of friends

Listen, now I will speak to you of four kinds of friends who are true-hearted—

These true-hearted friends are the one who helps you unsolicited, the one who is unchanged in your prosperity or penury, the one who tells you what is good for you, and the one who has affection for you

Of these, the first becomes your refuge in times of fear and watches over you when you are slack

The second one tells you his secrets and keeps yours He does not leave you when you are in trouble, but he sacrifices himself for your good

The third one keeps you from wrong doing and puts you on the right path, whether you like it or not His object is not to please you but to do you good

The fourth one is happy in your happiness and miserable in your misery He de-

fends you against slanderers and commends you ever with a true heart

I have spoken to you, Sigala, of friends false and true So, beware and be guided in your choice of friends Avoid false friends and abide with those who are true, for they will help you in cultivating righteousness and prepare your mind for the training of the Dhamma

—*Digha Nikaya*





7

The Irrelevant

The reverend Malunkya-putta, a monk, while mediating one evening, had the following reflection

The Enlightened One has never expounded his views on many important questions and has even evaded answering them. He has never explained whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, infinite or finite, whether life and the body are the same thing or two separate things, whether or not a truth finder

passes to another life after death I will go to him and have his answers And if his answers are not satisfactory, I will discard the robes of a bhikkhu and become a layman again

Malunkyaputta then went to the Enlightened One and put before him all his questions and said that if he did not receive satisfactory answers he would give up his recluseship and become a layman

The Enlightened One said Malunkyaputta, did I ever promise you that if you became my disciple I would tell you whether the world was eternal or non-eternal and answer your other similar questions?

No, Gautama

Did you ever stipulate that on your becoming my disciple I should answer all these questions?

No, Sir

It is clear that I never made a promise nor did you make a stipulation that, as a condition precedent to your becoming my disciple, I should expound all these matters to you Malunkyaputta, if a man were to say to the Truth finder that he would not become

his disciple until his questions were answered. then probahly he would die waiting for and without getting any answer from the Truth finder

Similar is the case of a man in great pain with a poisoned arrow transfixing deeply his chest, who does not allow the physician and friends to take the arrow out, saying First I want to know who shot the arrow, whether he was a Brahmin or of any other caste I want to know his name, lineage, height, colour and the town from which he came I want to know if his how was long or short his howstring of bamhoo, or hemp, or sinew and what kind of feather had his how shaft, of vulture, or falcon or peacock The man would never get to know all this before death overtook him because of the poison from the arrow transfixing his chest

In the same way, Malunkyaputta, if a man were to say that he would not follow the higher life under the Truth finder unless his pack of questions had been answered, he would get no answer before he was overtaken by death

The higher life is not based on the know

ledge of whether the world is eternal or non-eternal In this as in all the questions that are vexing you, there abides the fact of birth, decay and death, there abides the fact of sorrow, which my teaching is designed to exterminate here and now

I have not taught the things you want to know because they are not fundamental to higher life and therefore are irrelevant I have taught about the origin of sorrow and the way to end sorrow This alone is profitable for human beings and is relevant to their higher life This alone leads to Nirvana

—Cula-Malunkya Sutta





8

Choosing One's Words

Once when the Blessed One was staying at Rajagaha, Prince Abhaya invited him to dinner at his palace. The dinner over, the prince asked the Blessed One

Sir, would a Truth finder say anything which could be disagreeable to others?

Buddha This question requires clarification, O Prince

Prince Sir, I had been advised by the Nigantha to confute you and was told that you would not be able to bear my confutation

When the Prince was talking to the Lord he was also caressing his little son, who was on his lap The Blessed One looked at the baby and said

Prince, if, due to the inattention of an attendant, your little son were to swallow a pebble or a piece of stick what would you do?

Prince I would remove it, Sir I would insert my finger in his throat and pull it out, even if blood flowed And I must do this out of pity for the child

Buddha The same is the spirit of the Truth finder, O Prince He never says any thing which he knows to be false and unprofitable and also displeasing He never says anything which he knows to be true, but unprofitable and also displeasing But should it be true and profitable, he says it even though it be displeasing and distasteful to others

Also, O Prince, the Truth finder never says anything which is false and unprofitable, though pleasing He never says anything, which though true, is unprofitable, even if it

be pleasing But if it is true and profitable and also pleasing, then he says it on the proper occasion And thus he does out of pity for creatures

Prince When learned scholars and Brahmins come to you Sir, to ask questions are you able to divine their questions beforehand and reflect over them, or do you answer offhand?

Buddha Prince, in reply to this let me ask you another question Do you know all about the several parts of a chariot?

Prince Yes Sir, I know all about them

Buddha If people ask you, Prince, what a particular part is, have you previously to reflect what their question will be and what should be your answer? Or will you answer offhand?

Prince My answer will come offhand, Sir

Buddha In the same way, O Prince, when learned scholars come to the Truth finder to ask questions, his answers come offhand

The Prince made obeisance before the Blessed One and prayed to being accepted as a disciple

—*Abhaya-Rajkumar-Sutta*

Righteousness and Unrighteousness

Once when the Enlightened One was on an alms-pilgrimage in Kosala he came to a village named Sala

The Brahmin householders of the village gathered together and decided to question the Enlightened One And the following talk took place

Gautama, tell us why after death some people are reborn in misery and suffering, while others are reborn in happiness and joy?

Because some are wicked and unrighteous and deserve to be born in misery and suffering, while those who are righteous deserve to be born in happiness and joy

This answer Gautama, is too condensed Pray develop it for us?

Householders, listen there are three forms of unrighteousness of the body, four forms of unrighteousness of speech and three forms of unrighteousness of thought Similarly

there are corresponding forms of righteousness

Bodily unrighteousness is of three kinds

(i) One may take life and be cruel to living creatures, (ii) One may take what is not one's own by committing theft or robbery, (iii) One may indulge in sexual intercourse outside wedlock and entice and pollute girls and women

Unrighteousness of speech is of four kinds

(i) One may tell lies, saying that one knows what one actually does not know, or saying that one does not know what one actually knows—thus deliberately lying for some selfish interest or gain (ii) Or, one may be a slanderer, talking scandal of others and setting one man against another, thus causing discord (iii) Or, one may have a bitter tongue, speaking rough and harsh words that hurt others and provoke anger (iv) Or one may be a gossip, talking uselessly and without heed of facts and without mentioning the sublime Dhamma

Unrighteousness of thought is of three kinds (i) One may be greedy coveting other people's things (ii) Or, one may be wicked of heart, wishing ill to other people (iii) Or, one may be wrong in outlook and conceptions

always disbelieving in sacrifice, charity and other virtues, disbelieving Brahmins or bhikkhus, disbelieving all that is considered to be good and pure

Householders, remember people who act unrighteously in any of these ways are reborn after death in misery and suffering

And what is righteousness? It is the contrary in every point of the unrighteous ways enumerated before you People who live righteous lives are reborn after death in happiness and joy

At the close of this discourse the Brahmin householders of Sala praised the Enlightened One for showing them the right path

—*Saleyyaka-Sutta*





10

Against Lying

One evening, the Enlightened One happened to visit the revered Rahula, who seeing him coming placed a seat for him and brought water to wash his feet

The Enlightened One poured the water

over his feet himself and while pouring it asked Rahula Do you see this small trinkle of water?

Yes

Minute in the same manner is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies

Then throwing away the remaining water, the Enlightened One said Do you see this water now thrown away

Yes, Sir

Thrown away in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies

Then upsetting the pot the Enlightened One said Do you see this upset pot?

Yes, Sir

Upset in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from telling deliberate lies

Putting up the pot again the Enlightened One said Do you now see this pot empty and void?

Yes Sir

Empty and void in the same way is the recluship of those who do not shrink from

telling deliberate lies

What is a mirror for, Rahula?

To reflect, Sir

Rahula, you must reflect again and again —while thinking a thought, while speaking a word, while doing an act Whenever you do anything you must reflect, whether your deed will harm you, or others, or both If reflection tells you that a deed is harmful, it is a wrong deed which will lead to sorrow such a deed should be abandoned But if reflection says that a deed is good for you, or for others, or for both, it must be done The same holds good for thoughts and words also

All true recluses and Brahmins, Rahula, attain purity only by reflection Therefore, train yourself through reflection, O Rahula, through constant reflection of thought and word and deed

—*Ambalatthika-Rahul Ovada*



On Endurance

Once upon a time, O bhikkhus, there was a lady named Vedehika, who lived in the town of Savatthi. She had the reputation of being a good householder, meek in nature and gentle and sweet by temperament.

Vedehika had a slave woman, named Kali, who was not only a good worker but also clever and far sighted. One day it occurred to Kali that she should test the goodness of her mistress. She wanted to know whether Vedehika was genuinely as good as her reputation, or had she some ill-temper lurking in her heart.

Then, O bhikkhus, with a view to test her mistress, Kali got up late next morning. Vedehika thereupon mildly rebuked Kali for her laziness, and the frown on her forehead showed displeasure. The slave girl kept quiet, but thought that her mistress perhaps had an inward ill temper which she did not show because her work was always good. Suppose I

were to test the mistress a little further, said Kali to herself

Then, O bhikkhus, the slave girl Kali got up even later next day Vedehika thereupon again showed her displeasure not by mere frowning this time, but in strong words Kali kept quiet, and thought the mistress was not rough with her because she was a good worker But for that, she would have shown worse ill-temper Suppose I were to test the mistress a little further, she said to herself

Then, O bhikkhus, Kali got up still later next day This time Vedehika flew into a rage and, picking up the unfastened bolt of a door, she struck Kali on her head Thereupon the slave girl, with blood streaming from the wound in her skull, went about in the neighbourhood crying and shouting thus "See Sirs, the deed of the one who is known to be meek and gentle How she broke the head of a poor slave woman merely for getting up late "

Then, O bhikkhus, after some time an evil reputation spread abroad about Vedehika and people started saying that she was a woman of violent temper, callous and cruel

One can be mild and gentle so long as

nothing unpleasant happens. It is only when unpleasant things happen that the real test of one's meekness or goodness can be made.

There are five ways in which one may be addressed: 1 In or out of season. 2. Truthfully or untruthfully. 3. Profitably or unprofitably. 4. Mildly or harshly. 5. And, in love or in hate.

It should be your duty, bhikkhus, to remain unmoved howsoever you be addressed. It should be your duty to have goodwill and love in your heart, howsoever you be addressed or howsoever you be treated.

—*Kakacupama-Sutta*



Sacrifice: Right and Wrong

Once when talking to a princely disciple about sacrifices, the Blessed One said

O Prince, at a sacrifice where oxen and goats and fowls are slain, those who partake in the sacrifice have wrong views, wrong intentions, wrong speech, wrong action, wrong livelihood, wrong endeavour, wrong mindfulness and wrong rapture

Such a sacrifice, O Prince, can not bring any profit, nor fame nor moral upliftment

It is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest taking with him his plough and there sow seeds that are broken and rotten—in unfavourable soil, among uprooted stumps and out of season

Would these seeds grow into plants, O Prince, and would they expand and yield fruit?

No indeed, Master, answered the Prince

So is it Prince, with the sacrifice at which oxen and goats and fowls are slain

But where, O Prince, animals are not slain, those who partake in the sacrifice have right views, right intentions, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right endeavour, right mindfulness and right rapture

Such a sacrifice, O Prince, brings profit and fame and moral upliftment

It is just as if a farmer were to enter a forest taking with him his plough and there sow seeds that are unbroken and unspoilt—in favourable soil, well cleared of stumps and in due season

Would these seeds grow into plants, O Prince, and would they expand and yield fruit?

They would indeed, Master, answered the Prince

So is it Prince, with the sacrifice at which no creatures are put to death Those who partake in such a sacrifice uplift their character

—*Dīgha-Nikāya*



The Twin Verses

All that we are is the result of our own thought All that we are is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our own thoughts

Pain follows evil thoughts and actions, just as the wheel follows the foot of the bullock that draws the cart

All that we are is the result of our own thought All that we are is founded on our thoughts and is made up of our own thoughts

Happiness follows pure thoughts and actions, just as the shadow follows a man wherever he goes

Hatred will never cease in those who harbour such thoughts as "He abused me, he beat me, he defeated me" And hatred will cease in those who do not harbour such thoughts

For hatred can never cease by hatred It can cease only by love This is the eternal law

People do not realise that we must all come to an end some day, and they hate and

quarrel But hatred and quarrels cease with those who realise this fact

He who seeks pleasures, who is idle and immoderate in food, whose senses are uncontrolled, will fall a victim to Mara, like a weak tree falling before a strong wind But he who denies pleasures, is moderate in food, whose senses are under control, will not fall a victim to Mara, but will face him like a mighty rock facing the strong wind

He who wishes to put on the yellow robe of a bhikkhu must first cleanse himself of sin and cultivate virtue, otherwise he is not worthy of the yellow robe

He who takes untruth to be truth and takes truth to be untruth will never arrive at the truth And passion will break through his unreflecting mind as the rain breaks through an ill thatched house

He who does evil will mourn in this world and also in the next and will suffer the results of his evil deeds

He who is good and virtuous will be happy in this world and also in the next, for goodness will beget goodness

The thoughtless man, even if he recites

large portions of the Dhamma, will have no share in religious life, because he does not practise what he preaches. He is like a cow-herd counting the cows belonging to others.

But the virtuous man, who practises Dhamma, will have a share of religious life, even if he be able to recite only a very small portion of it, for he has gone beyond passion and hatred, acquired serenity of mind and is not attached to anything in this world or the world to come.

—*Sutta-Pitaka*



Reflection

What are the states of mind that make a man ill tempered?

Take the case of one who has evil inclinations, who praises himself and speaks ill of others, whose heart is full of malice, distrust and anger. Such a one will have an obstreperous temper.

Take the case of another who is meek by nature and eager to learn what is good. Such a person will have a sweet temper and a loving disposition.

Each man must argue about himself in this manner.

One who has evil inclinations is disagreeable to me. If I am inclined to evil I shall be disagreeable to others. Realising this, each man should discipline his heart and reform himself.

If a woman sees the reflection of her face in a mirror and finds a wart, or a blemish that mars her beauty, she tries her utmost to be

rid of it. Even so everyone should try to be rid of evil and discipline the mind into following the path of virtue.

Everyone should reflect thus: Are there any evil inclinations within me? And if he finds such inclinations lurking within him he should make every effort to put them away.

—Anumana-Sutta



How to Govern Thought

Once the Blessed One addressed the bhikkhus thus

Bhikkhus, those who apply themselves to higher thought should review from time to time the following five phases of mind

- 1 When there arise in your mind wrong thoughts associated with hatred and anger, you should divert the mind to a phase associated with what is right. By doing so, wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.
- 2 If, even after diverting the mind to a right phase, the wrong thoughts continue as before, then you should try to study the evils such thoughts may cause. By such study the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.
- 3 If, in spite of a study of the evils that

wrong thoughts may cause, such thoughts persist, then you should ignore them and not allow your mind to dwell on them. By such ignoring, the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration

4 If, even in spite of such ignoring, the wrong thoughts continue, then you should try to know in what mould they are cast and how they are caused. As you do so, the wrong thoughts will disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration

5 But if, in spite of all this, the wrong thoughts arise and persist, then with teeth clenched and with full determination you should dominate them. By so doing the wrong thoughts will certainly disappear and the mind will become firm and steadfast and devoted to concentration.

When at last a bhikkhu has become victorious over his wrong thoughts, by adopting any of these five ways, he becomes the master of his mind, conquering desire and thus ending all evil for all time

Thus spoke the Blessed One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what he said

Remember bhikkhus, the only way to become victorious over wrong thoughts is to review from time to time the phases of one's mind to reflect over them, to root out all that is evil and to cultivate all that is good

—*Vitakka-Sanathana-Sutta*



How to End Suffering

One day the Reverend Kassapa asked the Blessed One

Is suffering wrought by onself, Master Gotama?

No, Kassapa

Is then suffering wrought by another?

No, Kassapa

Then, does the suffering, wrought neither by onself nor by another, result from mere chance?

Indeed not, Kassapa

Does this mean Gotama, that there is no suffering?

I do not say that there is no suffering, for Kassapa there is suffering

Well then, Blessed One, you do not know suffering you do not see it—said Kassapa a bit dejected and annoyed

It is not, Kassapa, answered the Lord, that I do not know suffering and cannot see it, for I know it and see it too

Yet, my Master, in answer to all my questions you have said, "No, Kassapa. Indeed not." You admit that there is suffering, you know it, you see it—why not, then explain to me the cause of suffering and teach me how to end suffering?

The Blessed One then said

Every doer of a deed experiences its results. This is suffering wrought by oneself. But when one does and another suffers due harassment of feelings, it is called suffering wrought by another.

I avoid both these dead ends and teach the Dhamma of the middle path.

Listen, O Kassapa, all constructions are conditioned by ignorance and conditioned by constructions is human consciousness. And all name and form is conditioned by consciousness and conditioned by name and form are the human senses.

The senses condition all human contact and contact conditions feeling. Feeling in its turn conditions craving and craving conditions grasping.

Grasping, O Kassapa, conditions becoming, becoming conditions birth, and birth con-

ditions old age, suffering, sorrow, despair and lamentation Thus, O Kassapa, all evil originates

How to break this inexorable chain of evil, Blessed One?

Ignorance, Kassapa, is the origin of all evil If ignorance is removed there will be no constructions and consequently no consciousness, no name-and form, no sense-hungers, no contacts, feelings, craving, grasping, becoming and birth And thus old age, suffering, sorrow, despair and lamentation will stop for ever, Kassapa

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



Meditation and Contemplation

Bhikkhus, to become fit for meditation, to be able to enter the first stage of meditation, one must get rid of six things. What six things?

These six things are Craving for pleasures of the senses, ill-will, sloth, flurry and worry and suspicion.

There are, bhikkhus, four stages in meditation. What four stages?

First is the stage in which a bhikkhu, after getting rid of the pleasures of the senses and of the wrong states of mind, abides in solitude. He will, in due course, find that solitude will lead to analysis and investigation and this will lead to happiness.

In the second stage of meditation the mind becomes one-pointed as a result of analysis and investigation. Now the bhikkhu enters the meditation which is beyond analysis and investigation. He is in the stage of contemplation, which leads to rapture.

In the third stage of meditation the bhikkhu reaches a state in which he is indifferent to rapture, indifferent to everything and yet alert. He acquires a poise, a deep ease, in which he abides, knowing everything but needing nothing.

In the fourth stage of meditation the bhikkhu completely gets rid of both happiness and sorrow and abides in the utter purity of the Self.

These, bhikkhus, are the four stages of meditation.

Bhikkhus, just as the river Ganga flows and gravitates towards the ocean, even so a bhikkhu passing through these four stages of meditation will flow and gravitate towards Nirvana.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



Things to be Contemplated

Bhikkhus, these five things must be contemplated by all men and women, householders as well as bhikkhus

- 1 Old age will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it
- 2 Disease can come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it
- 3 Death will come upon me some day and I cannot avoid it
- 4 All things that I hold dear are subject to change and decay and separation, and I cannot avoid it
- 5 I am the outcome of mine own deeds and whatever be my deeds, good or bad, I shall become their heir

Bhikkhus, by contemplating old age the pride of youth can be curbed, or at least reduced, by contemplating disease the pride of health is curbed, or at least reduced, by contemplating death the pride of life is curbed, or at least reduced, by contemplating the

change and separation of all things dear, the passionate desire for possession is curbed, or at least reduced, and by contemplating that one is the result of one's own deeds, the evil propensities of thought, word and deed are curbed, or at least reduced

One who contemplates these five things can curb, or at least reduce, his pride and passion and thus be able to tread the path of Nirvana

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



The Ideal Recluse

Once when the Enlightened One was camping at Assapura he addressed the bhikkhus as follows

Bhikkhus, you are known as recluses. You must, therefore, know the true vocation of a recluse and the states of consciousness that make a man a recluse

What are these states of consciousness which really make the true recluse and the true Brahmin? These consist of a fivefold training

- 1 Train yourselves to be scrupulous and conscientious
- 2 Train yourselves in thought, and word and deed. Be frank and open and do not speak or think ill of others
- 3 Train yourself to guard your senses. Control and curb the appetites of the senses
- 4 Train yourselves to moderation in diet. Do not eat for pleasure, but out of neces

sity.

5. Train yourselves to be vigilant, evermindful and self-possessed.

One who can train himself thus is a true recluse and a true Brahmin, for he knows the states of consciousness that make a man a true recluse and a true Brahmin; he abides in these states and walks on the path of the fivefold training.

Thus, spoke the Enlightened One and the bhikkhus rejoiced in what he said.

—*Maha-Assapura-Sutta*





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True Retirement

Once when the Enlightened One was staying in the Anga country, there came to him a retired householder who had given all his property to his sons and had retired from active life. The Enlightened One greeted him saying "Pray be seated, householder." This made the retired householder very angry and he entered into argument with the Enlightened One, asking why he addressed him as a householder when he had actually retired and given over all his wealth.

The Enlightened One then said

There is a difference, householder, be-

tween giving over and giving up Listen, I will tell you.

There are eight states of consciousness which conduce to "giving up" and these are

(1) All killing should be banned, by holding life sacred

(2) Theft should be banned, by never taking what is not given

(3) Lying should be banned, by strictly adhering to truth

(4) Slander should be banned, by not speaking ill of others

(5) Greed should be banned, by never coveting what belongs to others

(6) Taunts should be banned, by speaking only sweetly

(7) Anger should be banned, by peace and placidity

(8) Arrogance should be banned by humility

These, householder, are the eight ways of giving up

The householder then requested the Enlightened One to expound these states in detail and the Enlightened One said

When I said killing should be banned by

holding life sacred, and theft and lying, etc., should be hanned, I did not fully exhaust the things to be given up. For a universal giving up, the Noble Path provides fuller instruction.

What is the universal giving up, please explain, said the householder, and the Enlightened One spoke thus:

1. A dog famished with hunger finds his way to a slaughter house and the butcher there throws before him a bone without any trace of flesh on it. Can the hunger of the dog be satisfied with that?

No, Sir.

In the same way the pleasures of the senses cannot satisfy the inner hunger of man. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

2. A vulture flies high into the sky with a piece of flesh and other vultures keep on attacking it to snatch that piece of flesh. What do you think the vulture should do?

If it does not let go the piece of flesh it may be mortally wounded and the attacking vultures may snatch it, said the householder.

In the same way, the pleasures of the

senses should be given up One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world

3 A man carries a blazing hay torch against the wind If he does not drop it, will the flame not burn his hand and the rest of his body? What should he do, householder?

He should drop the torch, Sir

In the same way the pleasures of the senses should be given up One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world

4 Suppose there is a deep pit filled with burning coal And a man who is fond of life and does not want to die is dragged to this pit by two strong men He will try his utmost to get out of the grip of the stalwarts for fear of being thrown into the burning pit

Yes, Sir

The pleasures of the senses are like the burning pit, that must be avoided One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world

5 A man may dream of delightful woods and lakes, none of which will be seen when he rises from sleep

Similar are the pleasures of the senses. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

6 Suppose a man has taken a loan from somebody and from the borrowed money he buys himself jewels and fine clothes and then appears in the market-place to make the folks feel that he is wealthy. And then the money lender takes back from him all his property in satisfaction of his claim.

The pleasures of the senses are like a loan that has to be paid back. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

7 Suppose in a jungle near a town there is a tree laden with ripe fruit, but no ripe fruit have fallen below it. A hungry man in search of fruit comes along and, having not found any fallen, climbs the tree with the intent of eating the fruit to his fill and taking away more in his pouch. Suppose a second man comes along meanwhile and he too is desirous of eating the fruit, but is unable to do so because he does not know how to climb the tree. The second man then decides to fell the tree with

his axe so that he may eat the fruit to his fill. What should the first man, who is at the top of the tree, now do, householder? Should he not climb down quickly to avoid being hurt or killed when the tree falls to the axe of the second man?

Yes, Sir

The pleasures of the senses are like the fruit hanging on the tree. One who has realised this truth can shed all desire and attachment to the things of the world.

Giving up the pleasures of the senses, realising their perils, is the universal giving up, followed by those who tread the right path. While giving over your wealth to your sons, have you given up all in the manner now described by me? Speak, householder.

On hearing this the retired householder realised the pettiness of his giving up and took refuge in the Enlightened One.

—*Potaliya Sutta*

Devotee's Prayer

Who is the real devotee?

The real devotee is one who is upright and honest, who is gentle of speech and free from conceit

The real devotee is one who is full of contentment, who has few wants and whose senses are under control

And such a devotee has earned the right to pray in these words

As a mother protects her child even at the risk of her own life, so let there be mutual protection and goodwill limitless among all beings Let goodwill limitless prevail in the whole world—above, below and around, untarnished with any feeling of disharmony and discord

—*Metta-Sutta*

The Parable Of the Cloth

If a cloth is stained and dirty, it can never be dyed well, whether the dyer dips it into green, or yellow, or red, or any other colour

What is the reason for this, bhikkhus?

The reason is that the cloth is not clean

Even so, bhikkhus, woe must be expected to ensue when the mind is stained and the heart is not pure

If a cloth is unstained and clean it will be dyed well, whether the dyer dips it into green, or yellow, or red, or any other colour

What is the reason for this, bhikkhus?

The reason is that the cloth is clean

Even so, bhikkhus, bliss may be expected to ensue when the mind is unstained and the heart is pure

Now, what are the impurities?

They are greed, malevolence, anger, malice, jealousy, deceit, pride and indolence

The Parable of the Log

Bhikkhus, do you see that log of wood being carried forward in the flow of the river Ganga?

Now, Bhikkhus, if this log does not ground on this bank or on the bank yonder, if it does not sink in the river, if it does not get rotten from within, if it does not get caught in a whirlpool, nor is it picked up by somebody—it will surely float down to the sea, it will surely gravitate towards the sea

Even so, Bhikkhus, if you do not ground on this bank or the bank yonder, if you do not sink in mid river, if you do not get rotten from within, if you are not caught in a whirlpool, nor captured by somebody—you will surely float down to Nirvana, you will surely gravitate towards Nirvana

The true follower of the Dhamma floats and gravitates towards Nirvana. He avoids the shores of the objective and subjective sense spheres, he does not sink down in the

delight of passion; he does not fall a prey to covert actions of sin that cause a rot in his within, he does not get caught in the whirlpool of sensual pleasures, nor is he captured by sorrows and pleasures

Bhikkhus, remember, a true follower of the Dhamma avoids and conquers all impediments in the way of Nirvana and, like the log floating down to the sea, gravitating towards the sea, he floats and gravitates towards Nirvana

—Samyutta-Nikaya



The Parable of Timber

Talking of man's release from worldly bondages the Blessed One spoke thus

Suppose, bhikkhus, a man is in need of sound timber and he goes about in search of it

He comes near a mighty tree, strong and tall, capable of yielding sound timber. But the man passes by this tree and cuts away wood and bark that is not sound and takes it away with him

What would you say of such a man? What would you think of him, who could not see the difference between sound timber and branch wood and twigs? His need of sound timber would ever remain unfulfilled

In the same way, O brethren, the real holy life does not inhere in name and fame, nor even in the observance of moral rules nor even in scholarship, knowledge and insight

The true holy life inheres in the release of the heart from all bondage

yourselves: "Am I or am I not greedy? Am I or am I not malevolent in my heart? Am I or am I not slothful? Do I or do I not have an excited mind? Do I live in doubt and fear or have I crossed doubt and fear? Am I wrathful or not? Are my thoughts clean or are they soiled? Am I in control of my senses or under their control?"

Bhikkhus, if on such self-examination you find that you are greedy, malevolent of heart, slothful, excited in mind, labouring under doubt and fear, wrathful, with your thoughts soiled and your senses uncontrolled—then exert yourselves hard to banish these wicked and harmful states.

When one's turban is burning bhikkhus, one must act quickly to extinguish its fire. Even so one must act quickly to banish the wicked and harmful states from one's mind and heart.

—*Sutta Pitaka*

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The true holy life inheres in the release of the heart from all bondage

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*

The Powers of a Learner

Once the Exalted One addressed the bhikkhus on the powers of a learner. He said:

There are five powers of a learner—

- 1 The power of faith. The true learner has faith in his teacher and believes in his enlightenment and his ability to teach the Supreme Truth.
- 2 The power of conscientiousness. The true learner is naturally conscientious and has qualms of conscience when acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
- 3 The power of fear. The true learner is afraid of the blame that comes from acting wrongly in thought, word or deed.
- 4 The power of energy. The true learner has an abiding energy to discard all wrong things and adopt the right ones.
- 5 The power of insight. The true learner has an insight into the real nature of things and he sees the decay inherent in

growth and thereby prepares himself to destroy the root cause of sorrow

Listen, bhikkhus, if you want to destroy sorrow and abide in the supreme truth, you must cultivate the powers of faith, conscientiousness, fear, energy and insight, for these, O bhikkhus, are the five powers of a true learner

—*Anguttara Nikaya*



The Root of Amity

Once when the Blessed One happened to visit Kosambi he learnt about disputes prevailing among the bhikkhus of that locality. He called the disputing bhikkhus to his presence and addressed them thus:

Bhikkhus, you are disputing among yourselves and hurling taunts at one another, because you do not seem to know the states of consciousness which lead to harmony and peace.

Bhikkhus, there are six states of consciousness which conduce to unity and harmony:

- 1 Acts of goodwill towards fellow beings
- 2 Words of goodwill sincerely spoken
- 3 Thoughts of goodwill sincerely harboured
- 4 Sharing with others of all that you have, down to the last crumb of bread
- 5 Sharing with others your higher life of flawless virtue
- 6 Removing all evil around you with the noble saving creed of love

These are the six states of consciousness which, being in themselves friendly and respectful, lead to accord, amity and love

Listen, bhikkhus, these six states of consciousness lead to super knowledge Each of these leads, successively a step further, and while there is something further to be done let there be no falling back in your steps

—Kosambiya-Sutta



Why Bathe In Holy Rivers ?

Sundarika Bharadwaja, a Brahmin, asked the Enlightened One whether he bathed in the river Bahuka. The following conversation then took place

Brahmin, what is there in the river Bahuka? What can bathing in it do?

Gautama the river Bahuka is considered by folks to be sacred and capable of washing away the sins of men

The Enlightened One then said

The fool may bathe in the Bahuka or the Saraswati or the Bahumati, he may dip in their waters constantly, or he may make pilgrimages to Prayaga or Gaya, yet he cannot cleanse his dark folly, nor can a sinner wash away his sin

What can the rivers do? What can Prayaga do? They cannot wash away the evil deeds of the guilty, nor can they make a sinner holy. And for the pure of heart every day is holy, because their deeds are good and they make

all creatures secure and happy

Remember, Brahmun, if you do not tell
lies and harm no living things, if you do not
take what is not given, if you dwell in faith
and are not callous—then why seek Gaya?
The well in your home is Gaya!

—*Vatthupama-Sutta*



Training

Two things, bhikkhus, I have achieved not to be self complacent in good states and not to shrink back weakly in the struggle

And without shrinking back, bhikkhus, I struggled on and on I said to myself I may be reduced to mere skin, sinews and bones, my flesh and blood may dry up, but I shall win what has not been won And thus, through untiring diligence and endeavour I won awakening, I won complete freedom from bondage

Bhikkhus, I want you to struggle on and on saying to yourselves I may be reduced to mere skin sinews and bones, my flesh and blood may dry up, but I shall win what has not been won

And thus through untiring diligence and endeavour you too, bhikkhus, by your own super knowledge, will here and now attain that for which men go from home into homelessness

Listen, bhikkhus, this is how you must train yourselves: We shall not be self complacent in good states; we shall not shrink back in the struggle. Let us be reduced to mere skin, sinews and bones, let our flesh and blood dry up, but we shall win what has not been won. We shall win the awakening and complete freedom from bondage

This is how you must train yourselves, bhikkhus.

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



The Noble Quest

There are two quests, Bhikkhus—the noble and the ignoble

What is the ignoble quest?

Take the case of a man who, being himself subject to rebirth, pursues objects which are quite as transitory. Himself subject to decay, disease, sorrow and death, he pursues objects which are no less subject to these evils. He wants wife, children, cattle, property, gold etc—all of which are fleeting and impermanent. Such a quest is the ignoble quest.

What is the noble quest?

Take the case of a man, who, being himself subject to rebirth and the round of decay, disease, sorrow and death, avoids pursuing objects which suffer from these evils. He endeavours to acquire the peace and bliss of Nirvana which alone is not subject to decay, disease, sorrow and death. Such a quest is the noble quest.

—*Āriya-Pariyesana-Sutta*

Dhamma like the Ocean

Once the Enlightened One compared the discipline of his teaching to the mighty ocean and said

Bhikkhus, there are eight wonderful things about the mighty ocean and the same exist in our noble eightfold path

- 1 The mighty ocean flows and slides imperceptibly in its immense fulness and there are no abrupt rises or falls in it
Even so, in the Dhamma discipline the training is gradual and there is no abrupt penetration of knowledge
- 2 The mighty ocean is ever stable and does not overpass its boundary
Even so, my disciples are stable in thought and never transgress the boundary of discipline
- 3 The mighty ocean throws upon its shore the corpses of the dead
Even so persons who are impure have no place in my order and are thrown out

of it.

- 4 The mighty ocean assimilates great rivers like Ganga and Yamuna which lose in it their name and identity

Even so, the four castes after joining my order are merged in it and lose their identity

- 5 The mighty ocean neither overflows nor diminishes in size, whether there is a heavy downpour of rain from the sky or not

Even so there is no overflow nor shrinkage in the state of Nirvana to which my order leads

- 6 The mighty ocean is of one flavour throughout, the flavour of salt

Even so, the Dhamma is of one flavour, the flavour of emancipation

- 7 The mighty ocean is the treasure-house of innumerable gems—pearls, rubies, quartzes etc

Even so, the Dhamma has many gems, such as the four arisings of mindfulness, the four bases of power, the five faculties etc

- 8 The mighty ocean is the abode of creatures

of great size

Even so, the Dhamma is the abode of
followers of great achievements

These, bhikkhus, are the eight strange
and wonderful things that exist in our noble
eightfold path, therefore, O bhikkhus, delight
in the discipline of the Dhamma

—*Udana*



The Test of Dhamma

Speaking of the test of Dhamma to Mahapajapati, the Blessed One said—

These are not Dhamma

The teachings and doctrines that conduce to passion, not to dispassion, to bondage, not to detachment, to increase of worldly possessions, not to their decrease, to greed, not to abstention, to discontent, not to content, to company, not to solitude, to slothfulness, not to energy, to delight in evil, not to delight in good—of such teachings and doctrines you may say firmly “These are not Dhamma This is not the message of the Master ”

But these are Dhamma

Of whatever teachings and doctrines you can assure yourself that they are the opposite of these things, you may then say firmly “These are Dhamma This is the message of the Master ”

—*Vinaya-Pitaka*

Teaching of Dhamma

Once a village headman asked the Enlightened One

Is the Tatbagata equally compassionate towards all beings?

Yes, headman, answered the Enlightened One

But does the Enlightened One teach Dhamma to some in full and to others not in full?

Now headman, suppose you had three fields, one very fertile, one mediocre and one of poor soil, which of these three fields would you sow first?

First the very fertile one, Lord, then the mediocre and lastly the poor one

In the same way, headman, to the bhikkhus, who are like the fertile field, I teach the Dhamma in full And why? Because they always dwell with me for shelter and refuge and for light

Then I teach the men and women lay

followers, who are like the mediocre field
And why? Because they also dwell with me
for shelter and refuge and for light

Then, do I teach the Brahmins and
followers of other sects who are like the poor
field And why? Because if they were to
understand the Dhamma they would find
true shelter and refuge and the light that
would guide them in their lives

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



What is Nirvana ?

O brethren! there is an abode where there is no earth, nor water, nor air

There is an abode, O brethren! where there is no world of infinity of space, nor world of infinity of intelligence, nor world of cognition or non cognition, nor this world nor the world yonder, neither sun nor moon

That abode, O brethren! has neither coming nor going, neither birth nor death Without origin and without annihilation and beyond thought is that The destruction of all sorrow is that

That abode, O brethren! is unborn, uncreated, unmanifested and unconditioned Unless it were that, there could not be cognised in this world birth creation, manifestation and conditioning

That abode is Nirvana

—*Udana*



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What is Revealed?

Once the Blessed One was staying in the Simsapa Grove, near Kesambi. There, taking a few simsapa leaves in his hand, he said:

Brethren, what do you think? Which are more in number, these simsapa leaves that I hold in my hand or those that are in the grove above?

Few, very few in number, O Lord, are the simsapa leaves that you hold in your hand, and more, far more, are those that are

in the grove above

Then the Blessed One expounded the truth of revelation in the following words

Just so, brethren, the things that I have revealed to you are few, very few, in comparison with those things which I have known and understand but not revealed to you. And why, brethren, have I not revealed them to you?

I have not revealed many things to you, because they are not conducive to the perfect state, because they are not concerned with the holy life and because they do not lead to cessation of bondage, to perfect calm, to perfect wisdom—to Nirvana. That is why I have not revealed them to you.

And what have I revealed to you, brethren? I have revealed to you that there is sorrow everywhere, that desire is the cause of sorrow, that desirelessness uproots sorrow and that the discipline of Dhamma destroys desire. I have revealed to you only what is conducive to the perfect state, only what is concerned with the holy life, only what results in cessation of bondage and leads to perfect calm, to perfect wisdom—to Nirvana.

—*Sutta-Nikaya*

The Self

Body, bhikkhus, is not the Self. If body were the Self it would not be subject to sickness, as it is subject to sickness.

Similarly, bhikkhus, feeling is not the Self, perception is not the Self, consciousness is not the Self and the constructions are not the Self. For they all tend to sickness.

Now, what do you think, bhikkhus, is the body permanent or impermanent?

It is impermanent, Blessed One.

And is the impermanent painful or comforting?

Painful, Blessed One.

Now, bhikkhus, is it fit to consider that which is impermanent, changing and painful in this manner: this is mine, this am I, this is my Self?

No, Blessed One, it is not.

In the same way, bhikkhus, it will be wrong to consider as Self, feeling, perception, consciousness, constructions etc., for they are

all subject to sickness and change

Listen, bhikkhus whatever is body is subject to change, it is past, present and future Whether gross or subtle, subjective or objective, good or bad, far or near, all body should be viewed thus This is not mine, this I am not, this is not Self

The follower of Dhamma therefore disregards body, he disregards feelings, perceptions, consciousness and constructions By such disregarding he becomes passionless, by passionlessness he becomes free and in freedom he gets the knowledge I am free of birth and death and free of change

—*Vinaya-Pitaka*



The Tathagata

If a fire were blazing in front of your eyes, Vaccba, would you be able to see it?
asked the Blessed One

Yes, Lord Gautama

And would you also know the reason for the blazing of the fire?

Yes, Lord The reason is the fuel of grass and wood

And would you also know, Vaccha, if the fire were to be put out?

Yes, Blessed One

And when the fire is put out would you also know the direction it had gone to from the place when it blazed—east or west, north or south?

This question does not apply, Lord The fire blazed because it was fed with grass and wood It went out when all the fuel was consumed

Even so, Vaccha, is the case of the Tathagata

The consciousness by which one defines the Tathagata, the feelings perceptions and impulses with which one may define him—all those have been got rid of by the Tathagata. Freed from consciousness, feelings, perceptions and impulses, the Tathagata is unfathomable and immeasurable like the ocean.

The Tathagata is incomprehensible, even when actually present. He is the Uttermost Person to whom human limitations do not apply. It cannot be said that he is, or is not, or both is and is not, or neither is nor is not.

—*Samyutta-Nikaya*



All Things are on Fire

Once while sojourning at Gaya the Enlightened One addressed the bhikkhus as follows

All things, O bhikkhus, are on fire. The eye is on fire and the eye-consciousness and the forms it sees and the impressions it receives are all on fire.

And wherefore are they on fire?

They are on fire with passion, with hatred, with anger, with infatuation, and with birth, old age and death, and with sorrow, lamentation and despair.

The ear is on fire, bhikkhus and the ear-consciousness—the sounds it hears and the echoes it receives are all on fire.

Similarly O bhikkhus, the nose is on fire, the tongue is on fire, the body is on fire, the mind is on fire—all things are on fire.

And wherefore are they on fire?

They are all on fire with passion with hatred, with anger, with infatuation, and with

birth, old age and death, and with sorrow, lamentation and despair

Understanding this, O bhikkhus, the wise man conceives an aversion for the eye and the eye consciousness, conceives an aversion for forms and impressions that the eye receives and conceives an aversion for all eye sensations, pleasant or unpleasant or in different

Similarly, O bhikkhus, the wise man conceives an aversion for the consciousness of the nose, the tongue, the body and the mind. And this aversion destroys passion and makes him free. And when he is free he knows that his cycle of rebirths is exhausted and that he is no more worldly

—*Maha Vagga*



Crossing Over

Bhikkhus, I will teach you the Dhamma for crossing over, for getting across and not lagging behind. Now, listen.

Think of a man who while travelling comes across a deep and wide stretch of water, the yonder shore of which is safe and secure, while the shore where he stands is unsafe and full of danger and fear.

And there is neither a bridge across the water nor a boat for crossing it. What shall the man do?

Determined to cross over from the danger of this shore to the safety of the other, the man prepares a raft out of sticks and grass and with the help of the raft makes his way across the water.

After crossing over it occurs to him that the raft has been very useful and he wonders whether he should take it along with him on his head or on his shoulders.

What do you think, bhikkhus, of this

man? What should he do to the raft? Should he carry it on his head or his shoulders in his further journey?

No, Blessed One

Like this raft, bhikkhus, is the Dhamma I have taught you. It will help you in crossing over and getting across and not lagging behind. And when you have reached the other shore you must discard even the right states of mind taught by the Dhamma.

—*Majjhima-Nikaya*



Rivers of Life and Death

Bhikkhus, there are four kinds of persons in this world

There is the person who goes with the stream and there is the person who goes against the stream. Then, there is the person who has attained poise of the Self, and lastly there is the person who, having crossed the stream, stands on dry land.

The person who indulges in pleasures of the senses is the one who goes with the stream.

The person who does not succumb to pleasures of the senses is the one who goes against the stream. He shuns evil actions and exerts himself for self purification.

And who is the person, bhikkhus, who has attained poise of the Self? He is the one who has destroyed the five fetters that bind him to the world. He is the one who has spontaneously risen to Nirvana and will not return to the world any more.

And lastly, bhikkhus, hear of the person

who has crossed over and gone beyond Hear of the person, bhikkhus, who, through his super knowledge has realised freedom of heart and mind, who has destroyed all that is fluxious and who, therefore, stands on the dry land of supreme wisdom and abides there

These, bhikkhus, are the four kinds of persons in this world

—*Anguttara-Nikaya*



The Last Sermon

Before the Enlightened One discarded his mortal coil, he addressed his disciple Ananda in the following words

What, Ananda, do the bhikkhus expect that I should not attain utter Nirvana unless I have given them full instructions about it? Ananda, I have preached the truth to each and all without any distinction or reservation

I have never had a closed fist as a teacher and I have never kept anything back Further, I do not for a moment think that I lead the Order or that the Order is dependent upon me Why then should I be expected to leave any instructions?

I am now grown old and my life's journey is drawing to the close Just as a worn out cart can be made to move along only with great difficulty and care, so can my body be kept going for some time

Therefore, Ananda, the bhikkhus of the Order should not lean upon my help or any

external help You must rely upon your own selves and you must be your own lamps to show you the path

Hold fast to the Truth as a lamp Seek salvation only in the Truth Do not look for any assistance outside yourselves

Overcome the grief and pain that arise from the cravings of the body, overcome the grief and pain that arise from the pleasures of the senses, overcome the grief and pain that arise from the craving due to ideas, intellect or emotions Be strenuous, thoughtful and mindful, whenever cravings in any form arise

Whoever they are Ananda, either now or after I am no more, who go along having the Self as lamp, having the Self as refuge and no other refuge, having the Dhamma as lamp, having the Dhamma as refuge and no other refuge, those bhikkhus will attain Nirvana

—*Dīgha-Nikaya*





42

Sayings of the Buddha

That which is most needed is a loving heart.

* * * *

Health is the highest gain, Nirvana the highest bliss

* * * *

To serve the wise and not to serve the foolish is the greatest blessing

* * * *

There is no fire like desire, there is no misfortune like hatred there is no happiness like tranquility

* * * *

The man whose mind is free of craving has no fear

Let no one deceive another, let no one
hate another, let no one do or wish harm to
another

* * * *

What is merit?

Absence of greed, absence of ill will is
merit Right understanding is merit

* * * *

What is bondage? Not bonds of iron or
hemp or wood—but attachment is bondage

* * * *

Just as a cornfield is ruined by weeds,
man is ruined by attachments

* * * *

Who is happy? One who is tranquil, who
avoids both victory and defeat

* * * *

Victory breeds hatred, the vanquished
live in sorrow Only he is happy who has
given up victory and defeat

* * * *

Grief comes of what is pleasing, fear
comes of what is pleasing One who is liberat-
ed from the love for the pleasing is also libe-
rated from grief and fear

When a tree is burning with fire, how
can birds live on it? Truth cannot live where
passions rage

* * * *

Put away, O bhikkhus, whatever is not
yours Your welfare and peace lie in such a
putting away And what is it that is not
yours? The material body is not yours, nor
feelings, perceptions or consciousness Put
away each one of them

* * * *

What neither mother nor father can do,
what no other relative could do, a well con-
trolled mind does It can elevate man

* * * *

By oneself alone is one defiled and by
oneself alone is one purified Impurity and
purity depend upon oneself No one can de-
file or purify another

* * * *

Men are ashamed of what they need not
be ashamed of and are not ashamed what they
should be ashamed of

* * * *

The evils of the body are theft, adultery
and murder The evils of the tongue are lying,

abuse and slander The evils of the mind are
greed, hatred and jealousy

* * * *

To refrain from all evil, to achieve good
deeds and to purify the mind—this is the
teaching of the Tathagata

* * * *

Speak the truth, do not be angry, give
when asked—even when there is little

* * * *

As rust which forms in iron eats it up,
even so one's own evil actions lead to an evil
destiny

* * * *

Suffering is the accumulation of evil

* * * *

One who brings sufferings on others can
never be happy

* * * *

Thoughtfulness is the path to the Eternal,
thoughtlessness the path to death

* * * *

Man makes his prison within himself,
therefore he must seek his deliverance within
himself only

The one for whom craving exists not,
 who knows and has no doubt, who has attained
 the deathless—him I call a Brahmin

* * * *

Not by matted hair, not by birth, does a
 man become a Brahmin, he in whom there is
 truth and Dhamma is the Brahmin

* * * *

Like a rock that remains unmoved in the
 strong wind, a learned man remains unshaken
 in praise or blame

* * * *

Who is the man of knowledge? He who
 does not depend on fine distinctions of words,
 he who is free from fear, he who stands by
 the Dhamma—he is the man of knowledge

* * * *

A thousand speeches consisting of words
 without meaning are valueless before a single
 word with meaning—the word on hearing
 which one gets peace

* * * *

A person without learning will grow grey
 He grows, but his intelligence does not grow

* * * *

First you should settle in your own self

what is good; then alone you may instruct others.

* * * *

Let us live happily, we who own nothing.

* * * *

Being surrounded by darkness you are not seeking a lamp!

* * * *

Just as one looks at a bubble, just as one looks at a mirage, one who looks at the world in the same way—him the Lord of Death cannot find.

* * * *

This world has become blind. Here few see clearly.

* * * *

There is not an evil deed in the world that can be hidden

* * * *

Do not let yourself be deceived, Ananda, life is a long agony, it is only pain: and the child is right to cry as soon as it is born. This is the first truth.

* * * *

Material form is impermanent. What is impermanent is suffering. What is suffering

is not the Self.

* * * *

The royal chariots wear out, and so too the body ages; but the true Dhamma does not age.

* * * *

In this body, six feet in length, with its senses and thoughts and ideas, abides the world, the origin of the world and the ceasing of the world and also the way that leads to its ceasing.

* * * *

The Buddha can only tell you the way; it is for you yourself to make the effort.

* * * *

Whatever be the cause of your sorrow and suffering, do not hurt another.

* * * *

By giving away our food to the hungry we get more strength, and by giving away our clothes to the poor we gain more beauty

* * * *

Have faith in the Truth and live it For no one can alter the Truth and improve it, and it ever remains the same

Now listen, this is *Dhamma* If this is,
that comes to be, from this that arises, if this
is not that does not come to be, if this ceases
that too ceases

* * * *

Dhamma is the wheel whose spokes are
pure conduct, justice is the uniformity of their
length, wisdom is the tyre, and modesty and
serenity are the hubs in which the axle of
Truth is fixed

* * * *

It is not necessary for a true follower to
go from home and resign from worldly duties
But it is necessary for him to free himself
from the illusion of self, to clean his heart of
desire

* * * *

Bhikkhus, a lotus, whether blue or red
or white, though born in water stands unsoil-
ed by water when it reaches the surface Even
so, *bhikkhus*, stands a *Tathagata*, for though
born in the world he has overcome the world
and he lives unsoiled by the world

* * * *

Bhikkhus, as a *Tathagata* speaks, so he
does, as he does, so he speaks This is why

he is called a Tathagata

* * * *

The truth is one indeed, there is not another

* * * *

He who has no distinction of *I* or *me*, he who pines not for what he has not—he indeed is a bhikkhu

* * * *

Not to consider “*I am this*” is freedom

* * * *

I is the cause of *my* Had *I* not been, *my* would not have been If *I* is not, *mine* will be annihilated

* * * *

The stopping of becoming is Nirvana

* * * *

I say that Nirvana is the destruction of old age and death

* * * *

When name and form have been understood completely, then, bhikkhus, there is nothing else to be done